

## Factoring in the Pandemic Experience to Protect Gender Equity Memorializing the Summer of 2020

In August of 2020 Northwestern University's Organization of Women Faculty distributed a survey to its membership with ten questions about how the switch to remote working and teaching impacted their work as teachers, administrators, and scholars. As far as we know ours is to date the most comprehensive, indeed perhaps the only, survey of the effect of the pandemic on Northwestern faculty.<sup>1</sup> This document, a companion to the Organization of Women Faculty's Call for Immediate Action, memorializes the experiences of women faculty during the novel Coronavirus pandemic so that they can be factored into Northwestern's pandemic recovery plan.

Individual faculty experiences must be taken into account. Northwestern faculty recognize the need for shared sacrifice in this extraordinary moment. While some faculty were barely impacted, others were impacted by the pandemic in extreme ways. As a group, junior faculty, teaching-track faculty bearing heavy course loads, the lowest paid faculty, and faculty with care-giving responsibilities were impacted disproportionately, exacerbating the vulnerability of these faculty members, who already carry significantly more stress. A theme of this report and the companion Call for Immediate Action is that the goal of career and pay equity in a world where the novel coronavirus is distributing burdens inequitably requires differentiated responses.

We call on Northwestern faculty and leadership to name, recognize, and respond to the reality that the combination of the pandemic and the heightened social unrest associated with George Floyd's murder created an extreme burden that often has impacted female, junior, and minority faculty disproportionately. Faculty with children lost childcare and school hours which made focusing on their work difficult or impossible. Many of the most impacted faculty were already disadvantaged by pay and recognition inequities in academia. Those most impacted will need extra help to recover their careers. Some faculty will need extra time to recreate lost momentum or recover a lost sabbatical. For some, the appropriate remedy will be realigned expectations for reviews and promotion, and/or salary adjustments so that deferrals or delays do not impact a faculty member's long-term salary. For some, the appropriate remedy will be an immediate salary boost to recapture ground that was lost in the pandemic moment. Faculty should be offered the chance to share disproportionate and exceptional experiences. Where a remedy is warranted, the impacted faculty should be consulted regarding which remedy would be most helpful. The larger goal in these decisions should be promoting gender and race equity at Northwestern.

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<sup>1</sup> The survey was distributed via email to 725 full-time female faculty in Summer of 2020 (Feinberg School of Medicine has a separate women faculty organization, and Feinberg faculty were not surveyed); 196 women faculty responded. We replicate the survey questions at the end of this document. The survey can be found at: <https://sites.northwestern.edu/owf/initiatives-and-reports/>

## Northwestern Experiences

A number of very senior faculty acknowledged that they had experienced little to no impact from the pandemic. The following sentiment was voiced by multiple faculty: *“I am a full professor, so the pandemic does not have much effect on my trajectory, beyond disrupting some of my research plans.”*

However, the vast majority of responses described **significant increases in work and stress** caused by the pandemic. The switch to remote teaching and working was time-consuming, and everything took longer. The summer did not provide a break, and there were **significant disruptions in research productivity** as a result of increased family responsibilities; interruption of access to research materials (exclusions from lab or studios, interruption of fellowships, closure of libraries and archives); interruptions in funding; interruptions in travel that have limited national and international collaborative research; increased responsibilities as teachers, advisers, and departmental administrators; and decline in ability to focus. These disruptions, respondents believe, will ultimately have a deleterious impact on their careers. As one respondent said, *“I am absolutely behind on everything right now and that makes it really hard to be an ‘active’ scholar.”*

Because memories fade, we need to document this moment, when the pandemic was still at full force, causing great uncertainty over how to protect our health and that of vulnerable loved ones. It was a moment when the need to learn to teach on-line overtook research and vacation plans, when mentoring students required extra time and effort, and when taking care of children and taking care of family members requiring medical support became very challenging. Faculty with children did not know if and when daycare and children’s schools would resume normal operation. The summer was full of meetings and training, with the expectation that colder weather would compound the risk and the challenge. This report quotes extensively to demonstrate and remember these different experiences.

This document serves an additional purpose. Those most impacted and those whose job remains vulnerable will have the least time and energy to shape the University’s response. We memorialize these voices so that they will not be forgotten or silenced when we plan for recovery. Responses have been lightly edited for anonymity and clarity.

## Increased care-giving responsibilities impact faculty performance

Female faculty tend to be primary caregivers at home, in their communities, and at work. This caregiving takes significant emotional energy. The worry and time dedicated to these roles expanded greatly during the pandemic. It is also the case that female faculty assume a disproportionate share of workplace caregiving, including service roles that cater to students and staff.<sup>2</sup> The work associated with these service roles increased in the pandemic, as did stress because students and staff under their care were also facing extraordinary challenges. Below is a sample of the care-giving experiences of women faculty.

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<sup>2</sup> Guarino, Cassandra M. and Victor H. Borden. 2017. “Faculty Service Loads and Gender: Are Women Taking Care of the Academic Family?” *Research in Higher Education* 58(6): 672–94. Mitchell, Sara McLaughlin and Vicki L. Hesli. 2013. “Women Don’t Ask? Women Don’t Say No? Bargaining and Service in the Political Science Profession.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 46(2): 355–69.

## For faculty with young children, school and childcare closures make working at home difficult

*My children are not in school and require a lot of adult attention to manage both online schooling and the social isolation of quarantining. Attending to my children's mental health requires consistent investments of time across each day, which constrains the time I have to work on research and meet with colleagues and students. The impact of the [pandemic] for my partner and I to be the sole caregiver and social support for our kids cannot be understated. No amount of zoom meetings for children can fill the void left by quarantining and so my partner and I must step into that void on an hourly basis.*

*I have [redacted: two children under age 5] at home, and neither of them have been in daycare since mid-March. They are (obviously) too young to entertain themselves, so the spring quarter was a relentless juggling act between my schedule, my husband's schedule, and caring for the kids. My husband is also tasked with teaching, as well as working with students/families that need extra help or don't have the proper resources for online learning. Our day starts at roughly 5am (when my [redacted: child] wakes up), and even with a couple hours of work in the evenings, there isn't enough time to get everything done. A lack of time for basic self care, such as exercise or adequate sleep, is affecting my ability to concentrate or work efficiently (on top of being interrupted by kids). Fear of infecting our parents means we haven't felt comfortable seeking help from family.*

*I have had about 60% of my normal working hours because of caretaking needs. I've turned down an opportunity to write for a major popular newspaper because I don't have childcare. I've put my research on hold and feel as though I'm treading water.*

*Homeschooling two elementary school children as a single parent while working full time. Loss of coparent's employment/income and therefore ongoing threat/danger to coparent losing his housing. Financial instability due to loss of coparent's income. Food insecurity due to loss of coparent's income. Lack of childcare options during summer. Children's mental health declines. Inability to count on nearby family for supportive childcare due to the need to isolate from one another. Personal mental health stress due to all of the above, isolation, lack of contact with colleagues, friends, and family.*

*I lost family members to COVID-19 and had entire groups in my family survive the illness in the Spring and they continue to endure the ongoing health impacts. As one of the matriarchs of the family I had to financially support these funerals. Not getting a raise next year really was difficult to imagine knowing the financial responsibility I hold in the family. It's horrible that I can't solely worry about COVID taking another loved one because of the loss itself, but terrified my family can't handle the financial impact.*

*The challenges are significant. All the usual supports and services which make it possible to work full time and manage a household fell away, from cleaning people....to food prep and just the psychological breather afforded by going out to eat and being served. Taking on all this care work was time consuming and exhausting. And that's beyond the emotional toll of caring for students and their heightened anxieties and concerns during a global pandemic. Basically, I was taking care of everyone and everything [and] there was no one to take care of me. And the university seemed to not even acknowledge or make any effort to address this by offering additional supports other than IT support for zoom. I get the impression that the average NU decision maker works out of spare bedroom in a comfortable, air-conditioned home with a wife who has a sandwich ready at lunchtime. This is not everyone's reality.*

*We live in a condo and have a toddler. When COVID struck, our nanny quit immediately to attend full time to her own family. It took us months to find a new nanny (nanny demand is through the roof), and we'll need to start a new nanny search in the fall when she leaves (and we've been*

*without night nannies entirely, through numerous sleep regressions, likely caused by the change in routine). But even with a nanny, it's still extremely hard to be productive from home, especially from a condo. Our child is loud, and there's nowhere to go where you can't hear her. She can also hear us talking on calls and gets agitated by being ignored by parents. Although day cares are opening, they seem to be impossible to get into if you weren't already enrolled before COVID. We are brainstorming and exploring better solutions for the fall, but it's a challenge for sure.*

*Both [my and my husband's] careers have slowed down because we are now also childcare providers. But because my job is "flexible" mine has more than my husband's. I believe this will magnify gender and parental gaps in the academy.*

*It also seems that COVID has created a dramatic productivity gap between those with and without small children -- or, more precisely, those with-and-without COVID-related productivity handicaps. There's a spectrum -- all parents of young children are experiencing challenges, but some more than others (i.e., some kids are high needs, some are already returning to daycares, some parents have large enough houses they can work in peace and quiet, some non-parents have other COVID-related challenges). It may not be easy to tell from the outside just how much COVID has restricted or enhanced someone's productivity, but there's a dramatic variance in its effects across different people, and this is likely to cause difficulties come tenure and promotion decisions. It is helpful that NU is providing a tenure clock extension, but as this extension is the same for everyone, I do fear that tenure decisions will inevitably be strongly influenced by "who happened to be in a COVID-resilient circumstance in 2020."*

*It is clear that childless colleagues now have a huge advantage in terms of being considered for promotion and tenure. Caregivers in general simply have not had the time and energy to devote towards pursuing leadership roles during this time of crisis, and I can't manage taking on more work at this time. Many of my professional meetings are interrupted by my children, which at first was embarrassing, but now it's just life. I don't think I'll be able to recover the energy I've lost for my work for quite some time.*

*My entire family got COVID. Travel restrictions and visa bans mean that we have no family support (extend family is all international). My spouse doesn't have an income. Lack of childcare so we have to take turns to take care of our kids at home (add all the meals, cleaning, heating and AC costs, etc.)*

### **Elder care impacts**

*I have a [exact age redacted: very elderly] mother in [redacted: out of state]. It has been a challenge arranging health care visits for her. I am over 65 and have a husband with a compromised immune system. I am worried about bringing home the virus to him.*

### **Workplace caregiving takes significantly more time and energy**

Even faculty lacking childcare or elder-care responsibilities faced increased care-giving responsibilities for their students, who were understandably very concerned about their futures. Faculty responded to this concern, which often took significant time and energy. Compounding the effects of the pandemic were the Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd murders in late spring, which led to the largest set of protests in American history as well as global protests against police brutality and racism. For students and their faculty mentors, the stresses and burdens increased. A sample of the extra support faculty provided during this time includes:

*This won't be news but I do think there is a lot of unseen support/care labor done primarily (but not only) by women faculty members. I'm not sure how this can be compensated, but perhaps simply asking how many hours per week are spent supporting grad students both personally and professionally would be a way to find out.*

*As a female professor who teaches small-enrollment courses, I spend significant time providing individual attention to students. These efforts are invisible in regular times. I expect I will need to provide many additional hours of support for students, for which I will not be paid or recognized.*

*I now hold a weekly support group (online) for grad students which has become quite a large commitment. I am happy to do it.*

*There is also a psychological toll of worrying about students, who are clearly struggling during this pandemic. Teaching is about more than imparting information, and figuring out the best way to support students has been challenging.*

*Huge increase in COVID-related student stress which I encounter as an adviser: including death and illness of direct family members, student illness, homelessness, lack of access to internet, existing mental health problems exacerbated by circumstances.*

*Teaching and mentoring students takes more time and effort. Students themselves are stressed and stretched, particularly our Black students who face family loss at higher rates and walk through the current civil rights moment as well. For my experiential learning courses, preparing to teach remotely or hybrid or both poses a new challenge in sourcing meaningful client projects as well as structuring class sessions and team assignments differently now.*

*My position as [Director of Graduate Studies] went from roughly 40% of my time to 90%, with students not having internet or working computers, some students contracting COVID, some students having financial need so extreme they had to move out of their apartments, along with mentoring students who were teaching online for the first time, navigating the dire situation for international students, and taking on more admin work, as one of the program assistants in our department was furloughed.*

*Office hours are longer, had to schedule more sessions to accommodate students abroad; reschedule/create new exams for students who have a death in their family, contracted COVID, or lost internet connection during exam. Dealt with more cases of depression during the spring quarter as a reason that students had a harder time with material.*

*Students are stressed and freaked out. I have spent much more time in a counselor role, trying to provide support and problem solving their professional and personal issues. Not only is this time consuming, it's very emotionally taxing as well.*

*A few examples of attention I have provided since April:*

- 1) I've been coaching/supporting 6 class of 2020 graduates for exam preparation, providing encouragement and listening to their stress due to the changes in the exam dates, etc. For one student, I have had 4 separate 2-hour Zoom sessions.*
- 2) I've been supporting 3 current African-American students regarding the fallout from the George Floyd murder. This included individual 1-hour+ Zoom meetings with each of them.*
- 3) I've provided support to 3 current international students regarding the Trump administration's rule changes regarding whether they could remain in the U.S. if the School used online teaching.*
- 4) In one section of my summer course, 9 [of] 15 students required extensions on the final assignment. I expect that this fall, a similar proportion of students will require such accommodations.*

*Management of my lab has become more challenging due to distancing requirements; there is a whole new level of schedule coordination required. I am also learning how to manage through zoom - not all of my group members can work as effectively in these circumstances, and I am learning how I can help them overcome the challenge.*

*The black lives matter component of the crisis has led to increased demands on our department by graduate students.*

## Loss of essential workspaces impacts productivity

Faculty whose research depends on an access to a lab were unable to work as long as they lacked access to their lab. Understandably, creating access to labs was a top administrative priority. Our focus is on the equity impact of lost access more generally. Many faculty found themselves unable to work because of a lack of an essential workplace. Whether it was because of a lack of access to offices or competing demands, there are a number of early indicators that female faculty productivity is being impacted in ways that could set back the goal of gender parity in academia.<sup>3</sup>

*Losing access to my office was a devastating blow for the summer as the university closed buildings to save on costs. I had special permission to work on campus for spring term to teach given bandwidth concerns, but just as I finished what felt like a marathon and was wrapping up the quarter, I found out there were another 40 miles to go. We were told that once the term ended, we could only come to campus for 15 minutes at a time due to building closures. I have gotten nothing done all summer without access to my studio/office. And I've totally lost momentum on the projects I had envisioned—my motivation as well as faith in the institution has eroded significantly. Creative work can't take place in little snatches and fit like mortar between other people's bricks. It requires focus and concentration and access to resources.*

*Although I am lucky enough to still have childcare, COVID has meant that both my husband and I are working from home in our two-bedroom apartment, sharing space with our child [age redacted: under age 3] and [our child's] nanny. As we have no dedicated office, one person must work in the dining room while one person works in a corner of the bedroom. When my child is napping, the person who was in the dining room must take calls in our walk-in closet so as not to wake [child]. It's impossible not to hear the other people in the apartment, so my ability to focus has suffered.*

*With 5 of us plus the dog at home all hours of the day, finding the physical and mental space at home to work has [been] the biggest challenge.*

*I have been spending money on paper and printer ink with no payback. I had to buy a screen to stop staring at my laptop and an iPen to teach that were not paid for. My back is suffering from not having my office setup. And my home workspace is too hot to work at in summer, so I am stuck in the middle of the house at the dining room table. It is very hard to focus with kids at home when at*

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<sup>3</sup> J. L. Malisch et al., Opinion: In the wake of COVID-19, academia needs new solutions to ensure gender equity. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA* 117, 15378–15381 (2020); Viglione, Guiliana. “Are women publishing less during the pandemic? Here’s what the data say.” *Nature* (May20, 2020) <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-01294-9>; Brooke Peterson Gabster et al. “Challenges for the female academic during the COVID-19 pandemic.” *The Lancet Correspondence* 395, 10242, P1968-1970; Ruomeng Cui et al. Gender Inequality in Research Productivity During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Harvard Business School Working Paper* 20-129.

*the table, and my body is suffering from my current work conditions. NU has offered no support to improve our working environment at home, so my productivity will necessarily decrease.*

*I have far less informal ("hallway") time with colleagues which means I receive less advice and tips on career-related issues not related to COVID. There are many support programs for dealing with the COVID changes, which is great, but nothing to reinforce these other interactions we used to have.*

*Given the work disruptions in terms of limited access to the lab, increased childcare, and reduced productivity of graduate students, I have been working around the clock. Since the labs reopened, I have been coming to the lab every day, most times staying until 1am or 2 am. I feel like I need to catch up so that I am not behind when things go to normal. At home, we have a [redacted: child under 5] and my husband and I have had to share the childcare load. The lab's closure meant that I was not able to make progress on my grants or obtain preliminary results for new applications. As a result, I have increased my lab hours to try catch up. It feels very exhausting and at times lonely and never-ending.*

## Disruption in career trajectories may require extra support

Many noted actual or anticipated loss of research time would lead to delay of tenure and/or promotion, or even loss of the ability to achieve tenure. Cancellation of conferences, presentations, and other events through which research is vetted will slow down the publication process for many. In addition, several respondents have delayed promotion to the rank of full professor because of their inability to complete a significant piece of research or because lack of childcare prevents them from putting together their package for promotion. A few also mentioned having been promoted this year, but that they will not receive the usual salary increase, which will have long-term effects on their income, as will the temporary suspension of the retirement benefit.

*As a pre-tenure tenure track assistant professor, I have significant worries that I will not be able to push my research far enough along during this time. Although the 1 yr clock extension is a good start, the pandemic has impacted people in very different ways. I worry that, even with the 1 yr extension, my (necessarily lower) productivity will be compared with people whose ability to work has not been as dramatically affected by the pandemic. I also worry that this is unlikely to change in the near future and the impact on tenure, mobility, etc. is so unclear.*

*I am...in the physical sciences. I rely on a steady stream of grant money to fund my group, and I am terrified of what next year's [redacted: federal research agencies] budgets will look like. I think it is highly possible that a significant fraction of basic science money will be re-allocated towards COVID efforts. While this may be necessary for the health of our country, I am not sure how I am supposed to run my group if new awards become even harder to come by. Additionally, though I am grateful for the tenure extension already given by administration, I am starting to worry this may not be enough...I am significantly (6 months) behind in my publishing timelines; this will result in an overall lower number of publications in my tenure package. I hope this will be taken into account when I am evaluated.*

*My research [redacted: with human subjects] has had to be halted since March, an especially big problem given that we are currently on an R01 clock.*

*There is considerable pressure to deliver an excellent teaching experience to students, but this requires a VERY SIGNIFICANT amount of time. I'm also being told to focus on research to boost my*

*chances at having a tenurable record. I don't see how those two things can happen when I'm at home looking after my kids.*

*Some of my graduate students are experiencing setbacks that also impact my professional future. Without resources like postdocs or development support, I do not know if I can deliver on funded projects.*

*I do research in [redacted: public setting] and all new data collection has been halted. In addition, I had a grant under review. The funder did end up funding it, but ended up cutting the amount by 25% due to the fact that their endowment had declined and they wanted to put money toward COVID-related research.*

*I have had multiple conferences, including two I was going to present at, cancelled. Additionally, the research I was planning, which relied on in-person instruction, has been put on hold indefinitely. As a first-year faculty, this has knocked back my progress to publication by, at my best guess, an additional two years.*

*The broad degree of uncertainty in our lives, both professionally and medically, means that planning for a quarter or a year has been, at times, futile. The absence of a meaningful long-term trajectory means that thinking big, designing new projects, or starting new collaborations feels foolish and risky. It is hard to predict what is possible over the next two months, let alone the 1-5 years of a new grant or project. Professionally, I am still planning with an outlook of a few weeks, which is not a way to make great strides.*

*I have significantly decreased the ambition of my professional goals because of the unknowns around the pandemic. I would go as far as saying that I am questioning whether I should remain at the university given how different the world and the climate in higher ed will be going forward.*

*It is very difficult to get my research back on track given the limited time I have to focus on writing (because of no office space, only parent to homeschool kid, school district remote learning a disaster in the spring). I am worried about my tenure timeframe. While we have an extra year, which I appreciate, I also found this quite stressful. Time is never equivalent... and it is unclear what I will be able to do with the extra year, as well as what the expectations for tenure will be. While there are some things I can control, which has always been the case, the external factors related to tenure that I cannot control have multiplied. This is further magnified by the personal factors that COVID has impacted, such as care work, health issues, and financial stability.*

## Permanently lost time due to pandemic and work-related disruptions

The pandemic created a differential impact depending on whether and how much faculty were teaching in the Spring or Fall, if faculty were on sabbatical when the pandemic hit, and if faculty had administrative roles that suddenly became much more time consuming. On top of extra teaching time, faculty reported that everyday work took longer during the pandemic, consuming time and energy and leaving faculty depleted. Some of the comments below impact all faculty, but the real concern is when these impacts fall disproportionately on particular faculty, and on female faculty more than male faculty.

## Differential impact on faculty with administrative responsibilities

Department chairs and program directors, as well as directors of graduate and undergraduate studies all noted the increased duties and pressure they have experienced since the pandemic.

*I will also say that as chair, the challenges that my colleagues have faced in this area have also indirectly affected me. In the Spring quarter, the colleagues who were DGS and DUS in my department were forced into primary caregiver roles for children who were home from school. This meant that they were unable to dedicate the time they normally would have to these roles. As a result, I sometimes had to pick up the slack, adding to my burden. There was so much email communication happening that some colleagues felt overwhelmed and didn't respond as often. The result of both of these situations meant that I often felt less supported than I might have, which was quite stressful.*

*As department chair, I have been inundated with unexpected emails from [redacted: school], the Provost's office, etc., mandating new protocols, asking for new kinds of information -- it never seems to stop. I was counting on this summer to recover from the stressful spring and to catch up on my research responsibilities, but there hasn't been a break.*

*My administrative workload has greatly increased. Many emails without simple answers require my response.*

*Working entirely remotely has meant less time spent commuting. But it has meant that almost every other communication takes longer. "Asides" that could happen in five minutes after a meeting now mean a separate, half-hour meeting. Miscommunications that could be cleared up with an in-person chat now require a volley of emails to resolve. Finally, there's the fact that being on Zoom is physically tiring. After a day of 4 or 5 hour-long meetings, I find myself exhausted.*

*I have to work much more on administrative responsibilities associated with COVID, instead of focusing on technical activities. New things keep coming up every day.*

*As the director of a program, there has been a large increase in the number of meetings, administrative communications, and trainings necessary to make sure that our work continues successfully. The Program Executive Committee alone, which I direct, found it necessary to meet much more often (weekly, in fact) via zoom to keep on top of administrative, teaching, programming issues.*

*I'm in an administrative/leadership role in my department, and we've needed to change our course offerings and schedules for fall several times, and modify grad student funding multiple times. Our graduate students and faculty have been anxious and have had lots of questions about remote teaching, which have taken a lot of my time to answer. The administrative burden of dealing with changing budgets and collecting info for various requests from WCAS and the Registrar's Office has also been high.*

### Increased time devoted to teaching varies based on student and course load

All faculty engaged in teaching observe an increase in time needed to adjust to online teaching. Faculty teaching in Spring 2020 faced unprecedented burdens due to steep technology learning curves, students spread across the globe, and students with very different levels of access to the internet. Faculty teaching in the Fall 2020 had to devote significant time during the summer learning how to teach online and preparing to adjust to hybrid teaching that might be both in person and online. Faculty teaching larger classes generally needed more asynchronous content, and more time to respond to different student needs. Teaching track faculty with large course loads bore the brunt of the increased teaching time. The comments below memorialize these experiences, but again the concern is the differential impact on particular faculty.

*Preparation time for my 4 hours of weekly instruction has increased from an average of 2-3 hours to 4-6 hours per week. The hours I have dedicated over the summer to creating materials for the fall have also increased.*

*The learning curve for teaching remotely is steep for me and is taking time from my other duties as a faculty member*

*I am spending a lot of time worrying about the technology - will it work for me when I need it? Will I be able to competently use it in my teaching? I have to remind myself that the technology should not dictate how I teach.*

*Everyone acts as if the shift to remote teaching is easy--or a few sessions with Searle will make it a snap. The fact remains, no matter what, there is no common "room"—no sense of a community in dialogue on Zoom. It's a pretense. So my major approach to teaching—exploring ideas from multiple perspectives—suffers greatly. Also, to assure students feel that their work is being read (e.g. weekly reading notes) requires more time and written responses to every student—which is covered by discussion in a face-to-face situation. I.e. the artifice of zoom teaching and its limits create a host of new challenges and time-consuming work on things that would otherwise be part of a natural classroom. Ugh.*

### Differential impact of lost sabbaticals, lost access to research sites, and lost plans

For some faculty, the timing of the pandemic created additional challenges. Faculty who had planned field-based research and faculty whose long-anticipated sabbaticals were disrupted with childcare needs lost essential opportunities that are not easily replaced. Co-authored projects and projects where graduate students are important contributors were also delayed as team members faced their own challenges.

*From mid-March to the end of August, I will have lost six months of my year-long sabbatical to the lockdown: I could not travel, had to cancel two research trips, could not use necessary libraries or archives, and had new care-taking that made consistent writing much more difficult. In addition, I was also ill in mid-March, probably with COVID-19 (though there was no testing), and have had lingering symptoms since. I was planning to finish three writing projects this academic year 2019-20, but will finish only one (albeit a big one). This will radically slow down my time to my next promotion.*

*The number of faculty meetings has roughly tripled, as have demands that I produce work to support other faculty members.*

*I have been unable to plan much of anything while K-12 school plans have been unavailable.*

*I have been able only to finish things, but not start things on my own. I don't have the bandwidth to write or think.*

*I had planned some (self-directed) professional development in the spring. I had worked extra hard in winter to make this possible, and was anticipating some time to slow down and focus on that new idea. The extra time I created was consumed by different kinds of work tasks and taking care of my family.*

*I am a Full Professor with a [redacted: child under 13].... In a sense I was lucky that I was on leave last spring. It was my first full year leave from the University in over [redacted: number over 10] years of service, and I lost that leave and the nationally funded research I had to cancel.*

*I just published a book, and missing out on this year's conference cycle has meant missing out on the opportunity to promote it and forge professional connections in relation to it. I had also intended to*

*use the spring and summer of 2020 to ramp up work on my next book project, but the extra time I have spent 1) on advising, remote teaching, and emergency administrative tasks; 2) parenting; and 3) grappling with the multiple crises unfolding around us has meant that my research progress has slowed dramatically. I am concerned about having lost the momentum of publishing and what that means for my future research.*

*I am very concerned about the impacts to my current research work. I had a massive study underway that was breaking new ground but COVID has killed the design. I am deeply worried that I will not be able to get it refunded and essentially this very promising line of work will go unexplored.*

*I reduced the size of my research group simply because I cannot keep up with too many projects while teaching online and homeschooling my elementary school children. Smaller research group will definitely impact my research productivity... and this will impact my competitiveness for recognition and awards by my research community*

## Impact on Teaching and Service Assessments

For faculty whose career prospects depend on the quality of their teaching or service roles, there is added stress. Where teaching factors into their performance review, there is concern about a drop in performance impacting their future at Northwestern. NTE faculty are concerned that the pandemic will provide a reason for their job to disappear, which makes them feel the need to be super-performers. Meanwhile, faculty with heavy teaching loads have faced a disproportionate increase in their workload that is not remunerated. Faculty who do not face what one respondent called a “COVID-related productivity handicaps” may have found themselves with even more time to be research productive. Faculty worry that the difference between handicapped and research-advantaged faculty will introduce additional pay inequities.<sup>4</sup>

### Impact on teaching quality

Faculty whose job depends on their teaching were particularly concerned about their students, and about their ability to perform well as teachers at this particular moment.

*I am concerned that my teaching will suffer and, as a result, my students will suffer. My goal is to be a competent, creative, demanding teacher and I am having to re-think how I teach. I have reduced my outside volunteer work and additional academic service work in order to more completely focus on my teaching.*

*[I'm] changing courses to fit an online platform and having to pre-record lectures, having to come up with new projects for undergraduates to work on remotely (particularly those that had been doing only bench work and had to be trained in complex data analysis techniques they would have learned more gradually in normal situations), helping come up with alternative dissertation projects for my graduate students....*

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<sup>4</sup> Zimmer, Katarina. “Gender Gap in Research Output Widens During Pandemic.” *The Scientist* June 25, 2020. <https://www.the-scientist.com/news-opinion/gender-gap-in-research-output-widens-during-pandemic-67665> Anna Fazackerley. “Women's research plummets during lockdown - but articles from men increase.” *The Guardian* May 12 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/may/12/womens-research-plummets-during-lockdown-but-articles-from-men-increase>

*I survived spring quarter, and so did my family, but we're (in all honesty) looking at an entire academic year online for both NU and for K-12. I simply don't know what I'm going to do in terms of balancing everything, especially as I'm NTT at NU and thus do not have protection of tenure; for us, if we have 3-4 'bad' quarters in terms of productivity (keeping in mind that many of us are teaching online anywhere from 1-4 classes a quarter, which means anywhere from 3-12+ hours weekly on Zoom teaching only—not counting prep, grading, meetings, etc.), will our "low merit" performance mean that we are fired first? .... So, we NTT faculty in particular are even more vulnerable.... The Provost's flexible work arrangement policy does not seem particularly geared towards us, and—as usual—leaves things up to "supervisors", which is why we continue to have disparity among how women/men faculty are treated within and across schools/departments.*

*My contract is set to renew at the end of next year. With the fiscal crisis that the pandemic has caused NU, I'm worried about my contract being renewed. The extra "service" work that I had been working on was largely cancelled by the end of the year, as were many summer opportunities, and all of the upcoming professional conferences. I just worry that I'm not going to be able to do enough to be competitive for renewal on top of a shaky financial moment for the university.*

## Added Stressors

The overwhelming sentiment that comes through the surveys is how much stress the pandemic created on faculty, because of caregiving responsibilities and worries, uncertainty, the inability to receive real time answers to their queries, the inability to plan and in many cases personal circumstances created or exacerbated by the pandemic. It is difficult to know of the particular circumstances that impact faculty. Below are some reports that may represent a larger class of impacts on faculty.

### Work related burdens for professional obligations outside of Northwestern

For some faculty, external professional obligations are part of being a Northwestern faculty member. Some faculty faced increasing work associated with these external yet nonetheless professional obligations.

*Serving as annual conference chair for my professional organization during its move to remote for next year has been incredibly time-consuming. A conference I was organizing was postponed and has been a lot of work to reschedule.*

*I was organizing an in person conference for this summer, and needed to transition that to an online version – this has take massive amounts of time.*

*I am also [redacted: in performing arts]. All work in my field has disappeared. Very, very possibly for a long time. I have always said that I could not teach [redacted] without practicing it. It is an integral part of my identity as a teacher. Now I must learn a new identity.*

*I am also a professional in [redacted: performing arts] – a realm that is facing an existential crisis. My [redacted: performing arts organization] may not survive. I have had productions cancelled. It is impossible to plan anything.*

## Faculty who needed realtime answers to their questions, or who worried about changes being discussed:

*Having to improvise safe policies for my lab when we don't even know what we're dealing with and I am in no way trained to make these kinds of decisions. If something goes wrong, I'm sure I'll be held liable, but the university/department did not offer clear guidance on many matters.*

*Business is hobbling along, decisions are still being made, but our communication is compromised. For example, there are proposed changes being made to the WCAS teaching track promotion and reappointment expectations and we were given one week to respond. These documents will have profound effects on faculty and they are not being flushed out with extensive communication and checks and balances, as they would be in normal times.*

Others noted communication gaps that add stress and slow productivity.

*[The pandemic] is highlighting some leadership and communication crises in my department and I worry that assumptions and expectations are not being communicated clearly and reliably. Rather than trusting each other as colleagues with a common purpose, there is a real uneasiness about how decisions are/are not being made and communicated. It's extremely stressful. We are NTT and feel that we do not have any protections.*

*It took over 2 months for my immediate supervisor to meet with my colleagues and me as a group. Our department chair still hasn't met with our specialized program group.*

*How many people in the NU community have died of complications of COVID-19?*

*Yes: it is now impossible to resolve minor questions about teaching or research (reimbursements, for instance) without spending even more time behind a screen. It is TOO MUCH SCREEN TIME for all. Every meeting is via Zoom, with students, colleagues, administration, etc. I am totally exhausted. These meetings all take two-three times as long as it would in "real life" to discuss matters in person. Also, I find we (faculty, colleagues) are expected to be available at all times, throughout the summer in a way we have not been in the past.*

## International faculty with family abroad and immigration fears

*The major stressor is worrying about my elderly parents who live in another country that I am prohibited from visiting. If the border policy changes, I would hope to take advantage of that even if it falls during term time.*

*Travel and immigration restrictions are putting an extreme burden on the international community (some of us are afraid of making waves more publicly to not jeopardize our immigration prospects down the road)*

*I'm spending a lot of time finding ways to help and accompany my family in [redacted: outside the U.S.]: more time on the phone, on video calls, more texting, running errands like wiring money, etc. Let alone the permanent worry, which is also energy and time consuming.*